

I had hoped to bring to Washington when I came here. And I think it's what the American people want us to do.

Health Care Reform

Q. What lessons have you learned from this exchange on the crime bill that you think might be useful in going forward with health care reform?

The President. That's hard to say—

Q. Specifically on the matter of the mainstream version now in the Senate, is that something you would support?

The President. The issue—but the issue in every case is, are the people involved willing to look at what actually will work?

What happened to us here in this crime bill in the last couple of days is that we even had people meeting with us who voted against the assault weapons ban. We had people meeting with us who thought that the bill was too costly but that there did need to be some money put into prevention to give these kids a better future. And the discussion was unfailingly about what was reasonable, what was practical, and what would work. What gets Washington all jammed up is when ideology and labels overtake what is the clear reality of a circumstance.

And I think that that would be possible in the health care debate. But everybody would have to be willing to sort of leave their preconceived positions at the door, at least be pre-

pared to moderate them some in order to achieve the goal that we all say we want. Everybody says we want two things, to keep the health care system we have but (a) achieve coverage for all Americans and (b) do it in ways that control costs in the years to come. The issue is, will we really look at that? And I hope we will. I am very hopeful.

All I can tell you is, I'm going to bend over backwards, even though I am not a Member of the Congress; I do not control the procedures in the Congress. I think the fact that this procedure worked well should auger well for the future. And I hope people in both parties will at least seek this opportunity on major pieces of legislation.

Thank you.

Q. Sounds like you support the mainstream proposal in the Senate.

The President. That's not what I said. I don't know what it is. I haven't had a chance to study it.

President's Vacation

Q. Will you get your birthday wish and go on vacation?

The President. I hope so. I don't know yet. I missed my other one by one stroke yesterday. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bosnia-Herzegovina

August 22, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on April 12 on our support for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts to achieve peace and security in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I am informing you today of recent developments in these efforts, including the use of United States combat aircraft on August 5 to attack Bosnian Serb heavy weapons in the Sarajevo heavy weapons exclusion zone.

Since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 713 on September 25, 1991, the United Nations has actively sought solutions to the humanitarian and ethnic crisis in the

former Yugoslavia. Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 824 (May 6, 1993), certain parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina have been established as safe areas. Sarajevo is specifically designated a safe area that should be "free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act."

A mortar attack on Sarajevo on February 4, 1994, caused numerous civilian casualties, including some 68 deaths. The United Nations Secretary General thereafter requested NATO to authorize, at his request, air operations against artillery or mortar positions determined by the United Nations Protection Forces

(UNPROFOR) to have been involved in attacks on civilians.

On February 9, 1994, NATO responded to the Secretary General's request by authorizing air operations, if needed, using agreed coordination procedures with UNPROFOR. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's decision set a deadline for the withdrawal of heavy weapons within 20 kilometers of the center of Sarajevo or for the regrouping and placement of such weapons under United Nations control. As of February 21, 1994, all heavy weapons found within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, unless controlled by UNPROFOR, would be subject to NATO air strikes. In response to the NATO ultimatum, heavy weapons were removed from the exclusion zone or placed in collection sites under UNPROFOR control.

On August 5, 1994, Bosnian Serb forces entered an UNPROFOR heavy weapons collection site near the town of Ilidza and removed several heavy weapons—a tank, two armored personnel carriers, and a 30mm anti-aircraft system. An UNPROFOR helicopter dispatched to monitor the situation was fired upon and was forced to make an emergency landing. UNPROFOR troops were unsuccessful in attempting to regain custody of the weapons. As a result, UNPROFOR requested assistance from NATO forces in finding the weapons so they could be retrieved or destroyed. NATO responded by making various French, Dutch, British, and U.S. aircraft available for air strikes, if necessary.

Unable to locate the specific weapons removed from the collection site, UNPROFOR and NATO decided to proceed against other

targets in the Sarajevo exclusion zone. Accordingly, on August 5, a U.S. A-10 aircraft strafed a Bosnian Serb M-18 76mm self-propelled anti-tank gun located inside the exclusion zone. No U.S. personnel were injured or killed nor was U.S. equipment damaged in connection with this action. Later on August 5, the Bosnian Serbs called the UNPROFOR Commander, General Rose, and asked him to call off the attacks. They offered to return the heavy weapons that they had taken from the storage site. General Rose agreed and the weapons were returned to UNPROFOR's control.

I took these actions in conjunction with our allies in order to carry out the NATO decision and to answer UNPROFOR's request for assistance. As I earlier reported to you, our continued efforts are intended to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. I have directed the participation by U.S. Armed Forces in this effort pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am grateful for the continuing support the Congress has provided, and I look forward to continued cooperation with you in this endeavor. I shall communicate with you further regarding our efforts for peace and stability in the region.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Members of the Senate on Anticrime Legislation August 22, 1994

Dear _____:

This week, the Senate has an historic chance to move us beyond old labels and partisan divisions by passing the toughest, smartest Crime Bill in our nation's history.

I want to congratulate members of Congress in both houses and both parties who have reached across party lines and worked in good faith to produce this Crime Bill. This isn't a

Democratic Crime Bill or a Republican Crime Bill—it's an American Crime Bill, and it will make a difference in every town, every city, and every state in our country.

The Crime Bill produced by House and Senate conferees and passed yesterday by Democrats and Republicans in the House achieves all the same objectives as the bipartisan Crime